



City of Rochester.

REPORTS

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AS TO

URBAN AND PORT SANITARY DISTRICTS

FOR THE YEAR

1897.

ROCHESTER :

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REPORT AS TO URBAN DISTRICT.

OFFICE OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,
GUILDHALL, ROCHESTER,
February 11th, 1898.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH COMMITTEE.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honor to submit to you the following as my Report on the Sanitary condition of the Urban District for the year 1897.

Population at Census 1891	...	...	...	...	26,309
Estimated to Midsummer 1897	...	...	...	...	29,903
Area of Urban District	...	...	...	...	2,906 Acres

I have the pleasure to inform your Committee that the Death-rate was a very low one.

The actual number of deaths in the district was	...	...	481
To which must be added those occurring in Medway			
Union belonging to your District	...	...	14
			<hr/> 495
Persons dying, not belonging to District, in Public In-			
stitutions &c.	...	...	90
			<hr/>
The corrected number of Deaths was therefore	...	...	405
			<hr/>

POPULATION.

Our estimate of the population of the Urban District at the middle of 1897 based on the assumption that it has continued to increase since the 1891 Census at the same rate as during the preceding decennium amounts to 29,903. If the ordinary increase of births over deaths for the past six years be added to 1891 Census the population would be 28,707.

The Death Rate for 1897 was therefore 13·5 per thousand.

The Birth Rate was 26·5 per thousand.

The Zymotic Death Rate was 2·7 per thousand.

The following is a table of vital statistics for the past six years.

Year.	Births.	Deaths from all Causes.	Deaths Zymotic Diseases.	Birth Rate.	Death Rate.	Zymotic Death Rate.	Infant Mortality per 1000 Births.
1892	813	426	54	30·1	15·8	1·7	137
1893	804	426	55	29·3	15·5	1·9	130
1894	787	442	53	28·0	15·7	1·6	143
1895	792	428	38	27·6	14·9	1·3	156
1896	818	463	78	27·9	15·8	2·6	136
1897	794	405	84	26·5	13·5	2·7	147

The following were registered as causes of death of Children under 5 years of age :—Scarlatina 2, Diphtheria 12, Whooping Cough 15, Diarrhœa 34, Bronchitis 30, Heart Disease 2, Injuries 4, Scrofula 2, Diseases of Nervous System 4, Convulsions 11, Atrophy 15, Diseases of Digestive Organs 5, Diseases of Urinary Organs 1, Premature Births 14, Other Diseases not tabulated 6.

PHTHISIS AND OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

The death rate from Phthisis during the past year was under 1 per 1000; that for other Lung Diseases being 1·9 per 1000. Four deaths were attributed to Influenza.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

Table shewing number of Deaths for past six years—

Year	Small Pox	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Diph- theria	Croup	Whoop- ing Cough	Typhoid	Diarrhœa	Total.	Death Rate per 1000
1892	0	13	1	7	4	15	7	7	54	1·7
1893	0	8	3	8	1	2	5	28	55	1·9
1894	0	2	9	16	3	16	1	6	53	1·6
1895	0	2	1	15	1	3	1	15	38	1·6
1896	0	24	9	17	5	2	7	14	78	2·6
1897	0	0	2	26	0	15	7	34	84	2·7

The above Table shows a still further increase in Zymotic Diseases in the Urban District.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT, 1889.

The following notifications were received during the year :—

Parish	Small Pox	Scarlet- ina.	Diph- theria	M. Croup	Enteric Fever	Erysi- pelas	Puerperal Fever	Total.
Strood and Frindsbury	0	81	62	2	9	18	1	173
St. Margaret's	0	75	53	1	14	19	1	163
St. Nicholas	0	6	8	0	5	4	0	23
Chatham Intra	0	5	5	0	1	1	0	12
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	0	167	128	3	29	42	2	371

SCARLATINA.

There were 167 cases against 202 in 1896. Two deaths resulted. The disease appeared to be of mild type.

DIPHTHERIA AND MEMBRANOUS CROUP.

Your Committee will note with regret that the number of notifications received was in excess of the previous year. The number of deaths resulting being 26.

One death was registered as having occurred at Fort Pitt Hospital. No notification had been previously received. It is at present not compulsory for Governmental Establishments to notify infectious diseases. Why Diphtheria should apparently be on the increase as to attacks in the Urban District it is not easy to explain. In my last Annual Report I dealt pretty fully with the question and I have little to suggest in addition save, that proper ventilation of sewers should be provided.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

Although 2 cases only were notified three actually occurred resulting in death in all three. The City Coroner held an inquest upon each.

ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER.

In 1896 the larger number of cases occurred in the Strood and Frindsbury Ward. In 1897 however it appears to have been less affected than the other Parishes. Your Medical Officer regrets his inability to point out the specific cause of attack in each case. Six may be fairly put down as due to drinking polluted water. One was already ill on her arrival from London. In six others an open privy was found on the premises. A few additional remarks as to this disease will be found under the heading of Water Supply.

MEASLES.

Whereas in 1896 this disease was responsible for 24 deaths, in 1897 not one death occurred.

WHOOPIING COUGH.

Fifteen deaths were registered, all under 5 years of age. This distressing and often fatal disease is one that your Committee can hardly deal with in any satisfactory way. A child may appear to be only suffering from a slight cough for a considerable time before the "whoop" makes its presence known. By this time all susceptible persons who have come in contact with the child may have become infected. In 1896 only two deaths occurred.

DIARRHOEA AND DYSENTERY.

Thirty four deaths were recorded in 1897. So large a number as this has not been approached by any year since 1893 when 28 resulted. Of these 34, no less than 29 occurred in August and September and all were under the age of 5 years.

ST. WILLIAM'S HOSPITAL.

The admissions from your Urban District during 1897 were as follows:—

Scarlatina,	under 5	19	Deaths	1
	5 and upwarbs	79	„	0
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		98		1
Diphtheria	under 5	20	„	4
	5 and upwards	61	„	5
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		81		9
Enteric Fever	under 5	1	„	0
	5 and upwards	14	„	3
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		15		3
Other Diseases	under 5	1	„	1
	5 and upwards	0	„	0
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		1		1

Total number admitted 195, deaths 14.

The want of wards for observation purposes is often very pressing. Although return cases are few and far between, even these might be reduced in number if proper Discharge Rooms were erected.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT.

The whole of the Workshops and Factories in the Urban District have been inspected with nothing of special nature to report. A few sanitary defects were discovered and remedied and a doubtful case of overcrowding was dealt with. No need has arisen to send notice under Section 3 Sub-Section 3 to H. M. Inspector of Factories.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Your Medical Officer was pleased to note that in making the terms of the recent appointment of Veterinary Inspector your Council included the following paragraph:—“To assist the Medical Officer of Health in coming to a decision as to whether any animals exposed in the market are in such a condition as to be unfit for human food and if necessary to attend before the Bench for the purpose of giving evidence.” The Superintendent of Police acting as Inspector under the above Act reports:—“Samples of Milk tested by a lactometer and found to be good 29. Four samples were submitted to City Analyst. Three were found to be pure and the other adulterated. Action was taken and the defendant fined £1 19s 6d.

WATER SUPPLY.

The year 1897 will be memorable for the severe outbreak of Enteric Fever at Maidstone with its 1897 attacks due to a polluted water.

Your District is supplied with water from three sources:—

1. The Chatham &c. Waterworks Company.
2. The Strood Waterworks now in possession of your Council.
3. Private Wells.

As to 1. The recent Report of Professor J. Dewar on the Chemical and Bacteriological examination is most satisfactory. Your M.O.H. has made an inspection of the surroundings of the source of supply. It would be a praiseworthy act if the Company would adopt means to reduce the hardness of the water. The saving in the cost of soap alone to your and other Urban Districts which the Company supplies would amount to thousands of pounds. (In passing why do householders allow the rainwater to fill their cesspools when at little expense they might save so much by collecting it.)

As to No. 2. Both high and low service reservoirs have been cleansed although they contained very little sediment.

Chemical Analyses were made from tap to reservoirs at Works and

at last to the Spring coming through the chalk 130 feet from the ground surface. Under your Committee's instructions samples of this water were collected by your Medical Officer and forwarded to Professor J. Dewar and Dr. Thresh for Chemical and Bacteriological Examinations. The Reports received from these acknowledged experts should at once allay any suspicions as to the purity of this water

While every facility should be given for the healthful and profitable occupation of gardening on the Allotments near your Works, the question at once assumed an entirely fresh aspect when it was found that these plots were very largely used for the purpose of rearing and slaughtering pigs. Your Council wisely resolved to take immediate steps to abolish such piggeries.

As to No. 3. Private Wells.-- During the past 6 years your Medical Officer has made analyses of 137 samples of well waters delivered to him by your Sanitary Inspectors. He has also examined the Public Water Supplies over 30 times.

To those acquainted with Water Analyses it is *not* usually difficult to express an opinion—when the chemical constituents as found shew the water to be very good or very bad, *but* when the water is considered as just on the borderland between purity and impurity it *is* difficult.

In order to obtain a Magistrate's order to close a well it is stated under Sec. 79 Public Health Act 1875, "On the representation of any person to a local authority that the water of any well &c.—likely to be used for drinking or domestic purposes &c.—*is* so polluted as to be injurious to health, such local authority may apply to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction for an order &c.;" therefore a well water has to be proved to be injurious to health before steps can be taken to close it. It is no easy task to persuade a householder that a privy, pit or cesspool is likely to pollute his well at any moment. He looks upon the question of payment of water-rate—and that the water is "clear and palatable," and "he has drunk the water for years," and shall still do so.

The four notifications of Enteric Fever in one family in King Street led your Medical Officer to make an inspection of the wells in use in the Urban District as to locality, surroundings, possible sources of pollution &c. He also analysed a sample of water obtained from each well. This inspection showed—Number of wells used for all purposes, 26 ; Company's water laid on but well not closed, 6.

This was duly reported to your Committee. In the meantime a letter of enquiry from Local Government Board was received arising from a communication made to it by the occupier of 104, King Street.

A crusade was therefore made upon the existing wells. The Town Clerk issued copies of the following circular letter to the owners : —

Guildhall,
Rochester,
March, 1897.

Dear Sir,

The water supply derived from wells within the City has been for years past a source of anxiety to the Health Committee of the Corporation and they have done all in their power to prevail upon owners to close the wells and lay on the water to the houses.

The recent outbreak of Typhoid Fever at a house in Troy Town causing the death of one of its occupants, was there is very little doubt caused by drinking well water and this has again brought the matter prominently to the notice of the Committee.

The Medical Officer is of opinion that persons drinking water from wells in the district do so at very great risk and the result of recent analyses proves that very few (if any) of such waters are free from pollution and that although the water from a given well may at the present time appear to be harmless yet at any moment it may become so contaminated as to produce the most serious results and this view of the question is fully borne out by the fact that the water of the well in Troy Town to which I have before alluded has been tested some seven times during the past few years without showing anything which would justify the Corporation in taking proceedings, while at the present time it is utterly unfit for drinking purposes.

In these circumstances the Committee have come to the conclusion that it is their duty in the interest of the public health to take very decisive steps and they trust that they may count upon the co-operation and assistance of the owners and occupiers of property.

The well mentioned at the head of this letter is situated upon your property and forms the drinking supply of the persons occupying the premises and I am directed to ask if you will be so good as to have the same closed and the water supply laid on from the water works.

Perhaps you will kindly let me hear from you at your early convenience.

I am, Dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

APSLEY KENNETTE,

Town Clerk.

The final result of this attack is shewn as follows :—

Number of wells still used for domestic purposes ...	...	...	8
Company's Water laid on but wells not closed ...	...	...	12
Wells permanently closed ...	...	...	12
			—
			32

In the opinion of your Medical Officer, the removal of a pump handle or the doming of a well is not sufficient to call the well closed. Such wells should be filled in with chalk. This would prevent any future attempts by ill advised persons to again use the water, as has been done on several occasions.

The S.E.R. water tank is ordered to be more frequently cleansed and the tank has been covered in.

A list of the houses which are fitted with stool valves and taps in direct communication with water closets has been ordered to be prepared with the view of waste water preventers being required.

GENERAL SANITARY CONDITION OF THE DISTRICT.

The number of notifications of infectious diseases received was considerably less than in the previous year. Your Sanitary Inspectors were therefore instructed to proceed with house to house inspection. This work has already been productive of much good. The Public Urinal constructed at St. Margaret's Banks is greatly appreciated. A like convenience is much needed at the bottom of Bryant Road, Strood. The removal and dealing with house refuse is at present a work causing expense and no return whatever. It is possible to convert this into actual profit resulting in lower rates and sanitary progress. With the adoption of a proper system of cell destructors with competent boiler &c. your Council could burn up this refuse—providing material for making paths &c.—generate steam for disinfecting apparatus, and light their own works by electricity from the energy produced from ash refuse.

Lower Delce Farm is slowly but surely being hemmed in by dwellings. The farm buildings are old, and the farm yard is a constant

swamp, the smell from which can often be detected from a long way off .

It is only a work of time when such premises will have to be dealt with as a nuisance

The whole of the Elementary Schools in your District were thoroughly fumigated during the Michaelmas Vacation. The outdoor offices of several schools do not receive such cleanly attention as they should. In one or two instances they were found to be in a filthy state.

The erection of a new Mortuary on the Town Quay as proposed by your Council is much needed.

The unbalanced minds of emotional people may be very largely affected by reading accounts of murder, suicide, incendiarism and so forth, and your Medical Officer is only reiterating the statements of others in saying that many of the theatrical advertisements depicting crime in its worst forms, as commonly seen posted about, are calculated to so influence such persons, with mental weakness as to tempt them by unnatural impulse and promptings to do likewise.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

These have all received attention. Two notices were served to cleanse the premises.

Several complaints have been received as to the night and day killing going on in one slaughter house close to the High Street. The adoption of fresh Bye-Laws for the regulation and dealing with slaughter houses is needed.

COW SHEDS.

An inspection of these has been carried out twice during the year. It appears to be the usual custom for the cowyards to be a site for a very large accumulation of manure until it is required for the land. Several notices were served to have such manure heaps at once removed.

Your Surveyor reported that part of one Cow house was intended to be converted into a slaughter house. Your Council however resolved that it should not be allowed.

BAKEHOUSES AND COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

These have all been inspected and need no special remarks save that in few instances the whitewashing had not been performed at the required times.

DRAINAGE.

The Storm Water Sewers at Strood and other parts of the District as proposed have been nearly completed. Your Medical Officer has very little to add to former Reports. He would however impress upon your Committee the desirability of at once taking steps to remedy the defects connected with the house drains and non-flushing of closets at Berstal. This matter was alluded to in the Annual Report for 1896. As the last tenders received for the emptying of cesspools amounted to £1,535 your Council decided to carry out the work. The necessary plant has been procured and as far as taking away the liquid contents is concerned, the method is an improvement. The previous cost per annum for emptying cesspools was £990, this would roughly mean the interest on £28,000 at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Would a system of Sewage cause as much outlay as this? The Sewage Tank System as at Exeter especially calls for your consideration as being a method needing no special chemical treatment or elaborate machinery to carry it out and the effluent could go to the river without offence.

HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES ACT, 1890.

Littlewood's 3 cottages, Delce Road, have been pulled down. Some 20 old and delapidated Cottages in Meeting Alley, Strood, have disappeared due to extension to business premises, 26 houses were reported as unfit for human habitation, six of these have been repaired and made habitable.

While perusing the Sanitary Inspector's Journal, the following list of Nuisances dealt with and remedied was prepared.

Stoppage in drains and Soil pipes	-	-	-	-	114
Defective W.C. and fittings	-	-	-	-	45
Sinks disconnected with drains	-	-	-	-	13
Defective and insufficient Urinals	-	-	-	-	4
Defective Cesspools	-	-	-	-	11
Insufficient Cesspool Accommodation	-	-	-	-	10
Defective Cesspool Ventilation	-	-	-	-	21
Defective Cesspool Coverings	-	-	-	-	19
No Ashpits	-	-	-	-	28
Defective Ashpits	-	-	-	-	11
Privies Replaced by W.C.	-	-	-	-	17
Defective Privy Structures	-	-	-	-	35
Defective Privy Pits	-	-	-	-	11

Insufficient Privy Accommodation	-	-	-	-	3
Insufficient W.C. Accommodation	-	-	-	-	1
Defective Traps and Drains	-	-	-	-	44
Defective Yard Paving	-	-	-	-	26
Defective Belltrap replaced by Gullies	-	-	-	-	42
Defective Earth Closets	-	-	-	-	16
Defective Sink pipes-	-	-	-	-	4
Defective Rain Water Shoots-	-	-	-	-	2
Manure and other filth accumulations	-	-	-	-	37
Dwellings Unfit for Human Habitation	-	-	-	-	26
Overcrowding	-	-	-	-	3
Defective Drainage of Cow Sheds	-	-	-	-	3
Dirty Cow Sheds	-	-	-	-	3
Dirty Slaughter Houses	-	-	-	-	2
Dirty Bake Houses	-	-	-	-	2
Dirty School Lavatories	-	-	-	-	1
Offensive Smoke	-	-	-	-	1
Unpaved and Undrained Stables	-	-	-	-	1
Orders to Cleanse Houses	-	-	-	-	25
Animals causing nuisance, Pigs 5, Rabbits 9, Ducks 5, Fowls 6, Pigeons 2	-	-	-	-	27
Water Leaking Through Railway Arch	-	-	-	-	1
Food condemned	-	-	-	-	3
Wells closed for drinking purposes & Company's water laid on					18
Total Number					<u>630</u>

In conclusion I hand to your Committee my sixth Annual Report, which I hope, with all its imperfections, may be found of interest.

In addition to the subjects suggested for your consideration in my last Annual Report, which as yet have not been fully carried out, I would like to add—

1. The purchase of buildings and yard at Lower Delce Farm.
2. House Refuse Destructor.
3. New Swimming Baths.
4. Ventilation of Sewers.

I have the honor to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM WATSON.

A. Table of Deaths during the Year 1897, in the Rochester Urban District, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES of LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics ; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Mortality from all causes at subjoined ages.							Mortality from subjoined causes, distinguishing Deaths of Children under Five Years of Age.														
	At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phtisis.	Bronchitis, Pneu- monia & Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Influenza.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	Total.	
STROOD & FRINDSBURY. 147	48	20	8	5	39	27	Under 5 5 upwds.	1	2	5	1	2	7	17	3	8	14	1	3	2	23	67
STROOD UNION 33	2	1	1		17	12	Under 5 5 upwds.						1			5	2	2			2	3
OTHER PARISHES THAN STROOD 201	67	13	9	9	52	51	Under 5 5 upwds.	6	4	2	1		8	16			14	1		2	33	80
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL ... 71	1	7	12		37	5	Under 5 5 upwds.									12	14	15	1	9	62	121
ST. WILLIAM'S HOSPITAL 18		7	8	1	9		Under 5 5 upwds.	1	5								1					7
FORT PITT HOSPITAL 8	2				2		Under 5 5 upwds.	1	6	5												2
BORSTAL PRISON 3						6	Under 5 5 upwds.			1							1				4	6
TOTALS..... 481	120	48	38	24	156	95	Under 5 5 upwds.	15	14	10	3	16	34		5	31	33	31	4	25	157	314

THE SUBJOINED NUMBERS HAVE ALSO TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN JUDGING THE ABOVE RECORDS OF MORTALITY.

Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto.	14					5	9	Under 5 ... 5 upwds.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																						</
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B. *Table of Population, Births, and of New Cases of Infectious Sickness, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1897, in the Rochester Urban District; classified according to Diseases, Ages and Localities.*

NAMES of LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics ; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	Population at all ages.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	New Cases of Sickness in each locality, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health.						Cases removed from homes in several localities for treatment in Isolation Hospital.			
	Last Census.	Estimated to middle of 1897.			Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	
URBAN DISTRICT, H..	26309	29903	794	Under 5 5 upwds.	40 125	38 90	..... 29	..... 2	..... 36	19 77	20 61	1 .....	..... 15
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL				Under 5 5 upwds.	..... 2	.....	.....	.....	..... 6	..... 2	.....	.....	.....
STROOD UNION INFIRMARY				Under 5 5 upwds.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
FORT PITT HOSPITAL				Under 5 5 upwds.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
TOTALS.....	26309	29903	794	Under 5 5 upwds.	40 127	38 90	..... 29	..... 2	..... 42	19 79	20 61	1 .....	..... 15



REPORT AS TO PORT SANITARY DISTRICT

OFFICE OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,
GUILDHALL, ROCHESTER,

February 11th, 1898.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PORT SANITARY COMMITTEE.

Gentlemen,

I have the honor to submit to you my Sixth Annual Report on the Sanitary Work performed during the year 1897.

The Vessels entering the Port were as follows :—

FOREIGN TRADE—

British Steam ...	38	Sailing ...	...	80
Foreign „ ...	25	„ ...	...	97
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	63			177

COASTING TRADE—

British Steam ...	1427	Sailing	6811
Foreign „ ...	4	„	4
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	1431			6815

Total Steam...	1494	Sailing ...	6992
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Total number of Vessels entered inwards 8486.

It will be seen that Coasting Vessels accounted for the greater number. Many of these Vessels are in and out the Port several times during the year.

Your Port Sanitary Inspector boarded the following vessels:—

FOREIGN TRADE—

British Steam ...	38	Sailing ...	..	80
Foreign „ ...	25	„ ...	...	97
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	63			177

COASTING TRADE—

British Steam ...	354	Sailing ...	380
Foreign „ ...	4	„ ...	4
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	358		384
Total Steam ...	421	Sailing ...	561

RIVER TRADERS—

Barges ...	1027
Steam Barges and Tugs ...	15
Lighters ...	14
Fishing Boats ...	14
Canal Boats ...	220
	<hr/>
Total	1290

Total number of Vessels inspected 2272.

Additional visits paid to ascertain whether notices had been complied with 158

Number and Nationality of Vessels :—

British 2142, Norwegian 40, Danish 40, German 27, Swedish 11, Russian 10, Dutch 1, French 1. Total 2272.

TABLE OF VESSELS MEDICALLY INSPECTED AT SHEERNESS.

Month.	No. of Vessels Arrived.	No. Inspected.	No. of Passengers.
January	191	18	189
February	203	24	243
March	185	26	398
April	191	27	193
May	258	36	357
June	203	35	132
July	—	37	480
August	—	30	210
September	—	18	18
October	—	32	18
November	—	22	33
December	—	10	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	1231	315	2271

No returns have been furnished of the number of Vessels arriving during the past half-year.

These figures include the Flushing Steamers trading daily to Queenboro'.

MEDICAL INSPECTION AT SHEERNESS.

It is unnecessary to remind your Authority of the arrangements made in conjunction with the London Port Sanitary Authority, for the proper Medical Inspection of Ships at Sheerness save to mention that Sheerness and Queenboro' are in the Port of London, with which Authority rests the responsibility of inspecting Ships at Sheerness but inasmuch as a large proportion of the Vessels entering the Medway are bound to the Port of Rochester it was deemed fair that a portion of the expense incurred should be paid by your Authority.

This arrangement has worked satisfactorily for some time until the past year. The Notices issued by the London Authority dated September 1st 1894 under cover of the then existing Cholera Orders, to Pilots, Masters of Ships and others, for Ships to bring up for Medical Inspection at Garrison Point, have proved most serviceable in dealing with cases of sickness other than Cholera.

When however the "Orders and Regulations of the Local Government Board dated November 9th 1896 relating to Cholera, Yellow Fever and Plague" appeared, the number of Ships medically inspected at Sheerness, commenced to fall off.

The Coastguard at Garrison Point and the Customs Officers at Queenboro,' under this Order appear to have received very definite instructions which are now carried out *literally*, consequently the assistance they formerly rendered by detaining Vessels for Medical Inspection is no longer continued with the result that in 1897 no less than 30 per cent. of the Ships from Foreign, passed through Sheerness into your District without being boarded by the Medical Officer.

There appear to be no legal powers to detain Ships for Medical Inspection unless they are "infected," "suspected" or come from a Port "infected" with Cholera, Yellow Fever or Plague. It is therefore left to the Officer of Customs who visits and the person in charge of the Ship to decide whether any case of sickness on board is one of these three diseases! So that any Vessel deemed to be free from Cholera, Yellow Fever or Plague is to be allowed to proceed although it may have Small Pox—or in short any infectious disease (other than the three mentioned) on board! The larger Ports e.g. London, Hull, Tyne &c. apart from the Customs have a thoroughly organised Medical Staff

provided with necessary equipment and conveyance for night and day visitation to Ships, the consequent detection of sickness of any kind—and removal of patients to Hospital if necessary. The Medway portion of the Port of London is not in such a satisfactory and well equipped condition and is likely, in the near future, to prove to be a cause of greater anxiety to London than to Rochester, for this reason. On the arrival of the Flushing Steamers at Queenboro' with all (or nearly all) her passengers booked through to London, in the hurry and scurry of landing and examination of luggage, it is now left to a Customs' Officer to decide whether any passenger, apparently ill is suffering from an infectious disease! Even, if it were possible to admit that the visit of a Customs' Officer to a ship was all that was required—if such visit be not paid what protection against the importation of Disease, has the Port at all? It appears that ships coming from certain Foreign Ports are signalled to from Garrison Point to proceed.

On May 10th the Schooner "Mary Elizabeth" from Cherbourg
May 11th the German Ketch Hoffnuug from Norden and the German s.s. "Ellida" from Libau passed through Sheerness without being boarded by the Coastguard consequently the usual quarantine questions were not asked and no medical inspection made until the vessels arrived at Rochester.

Your M.O.H. reported these facts and at the same time alluded to the unsatisfactory conditions militating against proper medical inspection at Sheerness—to your Committee—who directed the Town Clerk to communicate with the London Authority calling their attention to these matters.

The difficulties attending Medical Inspection at Sheerness are manifold. The Medical Officer has been very heavily handicapped in the proper discharge of his duties.

1. He has no means of conveyance to Ships save by the Coastguard's boat.
2. On receiving telephonic communication from the Coastguard of the arrival of a Ship—before he can reach the boarding Station the Coastguard have been often obliged to put off without him on account of strong wind and tide carrying the ship past.
3. In dense fogs, high seas, and stormy weather if the Coastguard do not put off, he must perforce remain ashore. The Coastguard's boat is only an open one and there are many occasions when it would be unsafe for the boat to be launched.

On receipt of telegram stating that a Ship or Ships had passed through Sheerness without inspection your Medical Officer has used his best endeavours to visit all such Ships. In many instances however he was prevented e.g. (a) the difficulty of always finding means of conveyance from shore at night. (b) Late arrival of ships through adverse wind or tide. (c) After scouring the Reaches in proximity to Rochester and Chatham, to find later on that such Ship was either at Sheerness, Queenboro', Otterham Quay or at Gillingham.

Strenuous efforts have been put forth by your Medical Officer and Port Sanitary Inspector to follow up, by rail or otherwise such Ships.

The Medical Officer at Sheerness, usually telegraphed the name of each Ship inspected by him. Your M.O.H. suggested that telegram need only be sent in the following cases.

1. When a Ship coming Foreign has passed without inspection.
2. When a Ship,—from which a person suffering from an infectious disease has been removed,—is proceeding up the Medway.
3. On any emergency arising.

These suggestions were adopted.

The further consideration of this question as to Medical Inspections at Sheerness, by the two Port Sanitary Authorities concerned is urgently needed. Additional remarks on other aspects of the case, will be found under the heading of "General Sanitary Work of the Port" to follow.

RIVERS POLLUTION ACTS, 1876.

Nothing of special import has to be recorded. The River is still a convenient receptacle for all that can be poured into it, not only from Rochester and Chatham, but also from the various Government Establishments situate on its banks.

HOSPITAL SHIP.

Up to the present time no sick patient has been received on board. In February your Committee appointed W. B. Harland and wife as caretaker and temporary nurse respectively.

New iron supports for davits, and a large windlass for mooring chains, have been provided. The ship has been painted throughout, and the caretaker makes praiseworthy efforts to keep the ship clean and fit for inspection.

Owing to the outbreak of Enteric Fever at Maidstone, and to the

fact that many barges and canal boats commonly replenish their water tanks from the river above the lower locks, it was considered advisable to distribute handbills on all the smaller craft. A supply of the bills was also posted to various Works for disposal on their vessels. The handbill was as follows :—

NOTICE. TYPHOID FEVER. CAUTION.

To Crews of Ships, Barges, Canal Boats and other Vessels trading on the River Medway.

Typhoid Fever is usually caused by impure water. You are earnestly advised not to take any Water from the River for drinking purposes.

Any cases of Sickness on Vessels should be immediately reported to me at the Guildhall Offices, Rochester.

WILLIAM WATSON,

Sept. 27, 1897.

Medical Officer of Health.

CANAL BOATS ACTS, 1877—1884.

The Port Sanitary Inspector, acting under my supervision, has carried out the duties of Inspector of Canal Boats.

Considering the large number of infringements found and every one remedied without legal proceedings being required, shews ready compliance on the part of the owners to carry out the terms of the notice as served by the Inspector.

No case of infectious disease presented itself.

The following table was prepared from the Inspector's Books :—

Number of New Boats Registered	-	-	2
„ Re-registered owing to Structural Alterations			0
„ „ for other reasons	-	-	7
„ Registered in Book at December 31st	-		102
„ Registrations Cancelled	-	-	2
„ Boats broken up, left district. &c.		-	11
<hr/>			
Number of Inspections made	-	-	220
„ Conforming to Acts and Regulations		-	109
„ Infringements found	-	-	111

REGULATIONS :—

Certificate not identifying Owner with Boat	1
Absence of Certificate - - - -	10
Marking, Act 1877 Sec. 3, Act. 84 Sec. 7 -	14
Overcrowding, Reg. 8 - - - -	1
Cleanliness, Reg. 11 - - - -	29
Painting, Reg. 9 - - - -	17
Ventilation, Reg. 3 - - - -	8
Decay, Reg. 11 - - - -	21
No Stores in Cabin - - - -	8
No proper Water Vessel - - - -	2
	- -
Total Infringements - - - -	111
Number of Infringements remedied - -	111
<hr/>	
Number of Women on Boats - - - -	15
„ „ Children between 5 and 12 - -	4
„ „ „ 5 years and under - -	2

Signed—E. L. FILLEY, Inspector of Canal Boats.

GENERAL SANITARY WORK OF THE PORT

Under the “ Public Health Act of 1875 ” and the “ Notification of Infectious Diseases Act of 1889 ” your Authority is empowered to deal with infectious diseases, nuisances &c. on Ships as with houses, provided such Ships are *lying within the boundary of your district*. Thus far the powers are defined and clear. But when ships with infectious disease on board are likely to pass from Port to Port unchecked, it becomes a matter for serious consideration.

Your Authority made certain preparations to provide against Cholera, Yellow Fever and Plague. On February 10th and 11th, Dr. Theodore Thomson, Inspector of the Local Government Board accompanied by your Medical Officer inspected all matters connected with the Port. The Town Clerk reported that Dr. Thomson had stated his entire satisfaction with the arrangements, and the very marked improvement in every respect since his last inspection and that he did not consider it at all necessary that he should confer with the Committee.

Should the Port Sanitary Authority of London however decide to determine the existing arrangements as to Medical Inspection of Ships at Sheerness it will be necessary for your Committee to provide an additional

and more reliable means of conveyance of your Medical Officer to Ships than at present. Moreover probable cases of infectious disease will have to be dealt with in the Port of Rochester instead of at Sheerness as has been done for the past three years.

The following Table indicates the notices served during the year by your Port Sanitary Inspector on Ships other than Canal Boats.

SANITARY DEFECTS.

		CASES.	REMEDIED.
To cleanse Forecastles or Cabins	-	89	88
„ paint „ „ „	-	64	62
„ cleanse Food Cupboards	-	7	7
„ „ Bedding	-	3	3
„ „ Water Tanks and Casks	-	7	7
„ „ Water Closets	-	4	4
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		174	171

STRUCTURAL DEFECTS.

Delapidated Cabins or Forecastles	-	17	15
Defective Ventilation	-	12	11
Lighting	-	17	17
„ Decks	-	11	11
„ Water Storage	-	13	13
„ Stores	-	11	11
Insufficient Sleeping Accommodation	-	4	4
„ Food „	-	1	1
Iron beams sweating over Berths	-	1	1
Paints and Oils exposed in Forecastle	-	1	1
Defective coverings to Water Tanks	-	4	4
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		92	89
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total No.		266	260

The Sanitary condition of Vessels continually trading in the River shows marked improvement. It must conduce very much to the comfort of crews, when owners comply in most instances, so very readily with the notices. The Factories and Creeks have been visited each week with the view of keeping a watchful care on the closets used by the men. One notice to thoroughly cleanse one of such, was served and complied with.

The present means of water supply to Ships for drinking purposes is due to private enterprise and is unsatisfactorily carried out. Complaints have been made that water cannot be obtained in reasonable time after the “ bucket is hoisted ” (the signal adopted for the purpose of attracting attention to the want experienced) and also that the charge made for the water is not so reasonable as it should be.

As no Public Pier or Landing Place exists between Blue Boar Pier in Limehouse Reach and the Town Quay in Bridge Reach, it is a cause of great inconvenience to Ships trading to the Port, and your Medical Officer has reason to bear testimony to the fact.

Your Port Sanitary Inspector continues to pay assiduous attention to his duties and your Medical Officer is led to believe that the Sanitary Work of the Port is being performed in such a way, as to merit the approval of your Committee.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM WATSON.



